



# Pelican News



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Blue Skies Newsletter

## Cedi could hit Ghana's exports

**Blue Skies Founder and Chairman Anthony Pile gives his view on the development of Ghana's export economy.**

Ghana needs investors and there are plenty of opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) in a country where there is an abundance of raw materials and a superb workforce in readiness. Like Blue Skies, there is potential for FDI cash to go into projects that add value at source or in other words, make the finished product like chocolate, or jewellery or doormats or even footwear.

However there are preconditions for such FDI activity where the products are bound for export to the West. One important prerequisite is low inflation in Ghana or failing that an inflation rate that is matched by a Cedi that depreciates at a comparable rate. If prices are to rise by 20% then the currency should weaken by 20% if the exporter is going to be able to cover operating overheads once his currency is converted to Cedis.

In Blue Skies, we shall look for ways in 2016 to reduce costs without cutting back on our staffing levels. The company's leaders in Ghana have come up with some ingenious ideas which will allow us to reduce overheads roughly by the expected inflation level, but it will call for some more bold investment from the Group. So Blue Skies is comfortable for now. But if the Bank of Ghana continues this ploy which makes importing attractive and exporting unattractive, there can only be one outcome: a still weaker economy with very few features to attract new money for exporting industry.

This is a shame since industry employs people and although the Ghanaian government employs a huge number, in a weakening economy no one can be sure of employment forever.



## Another gong for Anthony



Anthony has been named Foreign Investor of the Year in the Agricultural sector at The West Africa Regional Magazine Business and Leadership Awards held in Nigeria. Emily Addo Boateng, HR Manager of Blue Skies Ghana, is pictured accepting the award on Anthony's behalf.



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## **A tough decision for the Blue Skies Juice Judges**



This year Blue Skies were once again asked to put forward a team of judges to determine the winner of a juice competition for business studies students at a local secondary school. Two finalists from the Sixth Form of Guilsborough School presented their ideas for a new juice brand. The students had to design a product, come up with a brand and produce an advertising campaign which they presented to a panel of experts from Blue Skies. Product Developer, Ally Fyvie, HR Manager Julie Furnival, Business Development Manager, Hilario Jesus, and Brand Manager, Simon Derrick were the judges on the day. The winning team (pictured) came up with a juice brand called 'Glow' which is designed to give people more iron.

## **Blue Skies featured in UK Food Science show**



This month Blue Skies featured in an episode of the popular UK food science TV programme 'Food unwrapped'. The show attempted to answer the question of why pineapple cut at home can sometimes taste fizzy after a few days, compared to ready-cut pineapple which often does not. The presenter, Kate Quinton, travelled to Ghana to dispel the myths that pineapples grow on trees and chemicals are added to extend life, and reveal that it is merely speed, temperature and quality control that enable Blue Skies to produce cut-fruit that lasts as long as it does. The show featured Ernest Abloh and Alistair Djimatey who explained how pineapple grows and how it is cut in the factory. The show also showed how the UK health service is using the enzyme contained in pineapple called bromelain to treat burns victims. The programme is still available to watch in the UK from <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/food-unwrapped/on-demand/61830-007>

## **Lana talks at China conference**



Business Development Manager, Lana Mo recently gave a presentation and took part in a panel debate at the SME China Forum in Nottingham, UK. The forum brought together British enterprises to discuss issues related to entering the Chinese market.

## **Exceptional audit result for Ghana**



Congratulations to Blue Skies Ghana on achieving an excellent result in a recent unannounced BRC audit. The factory received a AA\* score which is the highest possible result and an amazing achievement considering the internal and external changes that have recently taken place and it was the first audit to be carried out against a new version of the standard. Group Technical Manager Stephan Morris said "This was not easy to achieve, but again the Ghana team showed their capabilities to be second to none".



# **Foundation receives over 70 proposals**



Our search for 2016 Foundation projects is underway, led by our Foundation Manager Alistair Djimatey. We have limited funds and resources, but we consider every request that comes our way. Our selection process enables us to evaluate project requests made from within the communities where our farmers and staff live.

So far, over 70 proposals have been submitted. Among them is the school shown in the photos above. This is a school of 149 students and 16 teachers but no proper school building. The classes are moved around according to the movement of the sun. This project along with all our projects must now be evaluated, prioritised and shortlisted by our representative Council and approved by our Board by the end of the year. It's an extremely tough and responsible job to have to consider so many projects with the limited resources we have, but it's a job we take very seriously.

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# **Blue Skies Sanitation team inaugurated**



The Blue Skies Ghana Sanitation team was inaugurated on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015 to represent the company in the National Sanitation Day exercise (NSD) declared by the president of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2014. The first Saturday of every month is earmarked National Sanitation Day across Ghana to keep the country clean and disease free. The picture above shows the Blue Skies sanitation team after a cleanup exercise in Accra with other sanitation teams, including officers from the Ghana prison service.

# **Judges visit School Farm competition participants**



Students from Yilo Krobo Senior High School recently received an inspection from the School Farm Competition judges. The school is cultivating 50X50 m2 maize in this year's competition. Both students and teachers have shown great interest in the program from the beginning and are hopeful of winning the competition! Good luck to all our participants. The awards will be announced on December 3rd.

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# **Book appeal launched by UK office**



Staff from the UK office have started an appeal for books for schools and libraries in Ghana. Blue Skies will ship the books to Ghana and distribute them to local communities where they are most needed. For more information please go to [www.blueskies.com/books](http://www.blueskies.com/books) or email [open.books@blueskies.com](mailto:open.books@blueskies.com)



# Introducing our new UK HR Manager

A warm welcome to Julie Furnival who joined Blue Skies as our UK HR Manager in October. Here are a few words from Julie herself...



Hi, I am Jules the HR Manager for Blue Skies Holdings & UK. To describe my introduction is pretty simple; it's been really great and I not only love the company but I am very proud to say that I work for Blue Skies. I have been made to feel extremely welcome by everyone I have met and yet to meet. I feel I have been here for a long time already (which is a good thing!).

From what I have seen in my short time here, I can honestly say I am overwhelmed by the drive of values and culture in such a vast business. It is very important that I ensure that those values are treasured and nurtured across all areas and with everyone in the company in order to build on what is already a fantastic family. Thank you so much for having me and I look forward to working with you all!

## Our Culture of Respect

What is the Blue Skies culture? Below are some key principles....



We treat one another with mutual respect no matter who we are or what we do. We do not see our staff as 'workers' but as individuals who each bring their own unique skills, talents, personality and experience.



We work hard and we are happy. We are young in spirit and quick to greet and welcome one another. We like to have fun and we enjoy life. We are conscientious and professional, and we help each other when in need.



We trust each other to come to work and do our jobs well. We avoid having 'clocking in' machines and we do not have bells to indicate the beginning and end of shifts. We instead treat each other as people who are able to take responsibility for our jobs.



We pay good salaries that are above the minimum wage, but we expect people to organise their own lives. We like to reward our staff but we will correct behaviour that does not suit our culture or our values.



Our amenities are provided for the benefit of all our staff, not just a privileged few. We encourage staff to eat together and to mix with people of different positions within the company.



We respect the environment because it provides us with the natural resources upon which we rely. We do not drop litter, we conserve energy and fuel where we can and we protect trees and wildlife.



We respect our suppliers and the communities within which we work. We help our farmers to achieve high agricultural standards and we support our communities by funding projects through the Blue Skies Foundation.

## Brazil marks 8<sup>th</sup> birthday



Happy birthday to Blue Skies Brazil who celebrated their 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September. Terezinha baked a wonderful Blue Skies cake (pictured) to mark the occasion and the original 2007 team were given special sweatshirts. Thank you to Adalgisa and Daniele for the report and the photo.

## Blue Skies baby news



Congratulations to Cyrille Kone from Blue Skies Senegal and his wife on the birth of their son. Cyrille's wife is pictured above with the baby who was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September.



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